

# HR CONNECTIONS

*A Quarterly Newsletter of the Department of Human Resources*



**W**elcome to the December 2011 edition of HR Connections. This edition will feature updates and previews of a number of department programs and initiatives. In an effort to preview some of the capabilities of the Columbus Human Resources Information System (CHRIS), pay advice information will be provided electronically beginning in January. Like any other application, the

system will be periodically unavailable due to service or maintenance requirements. Every effort will be made to provide employees with prior notice of service disruption.

During the period between Thanksgiving and the New Year it is critically important that we take time out of our extraordinary busy schedules to reflect upon and acknowledge the many blessings that have been bestowed upon us. It is during challenging economic times that we become increasingly more cognizant of the fact that things we often take for granted like employment, affordable housing, and access to health care, are unattainable for many throughout our nation.

It is for this reason, among others, that we must continue to make the necessary sacrifices to ensure the highest level of customer service delivery. I commend the dedicated professionals and service providers throughout City government who, through their hard work, ingenuity, and dedication do so every day. I am privileged to work with so many dedicated professionals for whom quality customer service delivery is a daily course of action.

As we count our blessings let us remember those who are less fortunate. Give generously to the Combined Charitable Campaign. Thank you for continuing to bless others as you are blessed. Have a happy, healthy and safe holiday.

**Chester C. Christie**  
**Director, Human Resources**



Mayor Michael B. Coleman

**December 30, 2011**

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## Consider This...

*"Never doubt that a  
small group of  
thoughtful, committed  
citizens can change  
the world. Indeed, it is  
the only thing that  
ever has."*

*-Margaret Mead*

## ***2012 Black History Month Celebration to Salute City's Bicentennial Anniversary***

*On February 11, 2012, 2:00 pm at the King Arts Complex Auditorium, City employees, their families and friends are invited to attend the 2012 City of Columbus Black History Month Celebration which salutes and honors the 200th Anniversary of the founding of the City of Columbus. Performing, in concert, for the celebration will be Columbus native, Aaron Diehl, the American Pianists Association's 2011 Cole Porter Fellow in Jazz and composer, director, Hamilton Hardin, who has composed and will direct an original musical score in honor of the City's bicentennial celebration. For more information, contact Dr. Melvin Richardson at (614) 645-8871 or [murichardson@columbus.gov](mailto:murichardson@columbus.gov)*

### **Space Heater Safety Tips**

- Keep all space heaters at least 3 feet away from household combustibles.
- Use space heaters only as a supplementary source of heat. These devices are not intended to replace the home's heating system.
- Do not use extension cords with space heaters unless absolutely necessary.
- Inspect the heater's cord periodically to look for frayed wire or damaged insulation. Do not use a space heater with a damaged cord.
- Check periodically for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug becomes very hot, the outlet may need to be replaced by a qualified technician. This could be the sign of a potential home wiring issue.
- Heaters should be placed on a flat, level surface. Do not place heaters on furniture; may fall, become damaged or break parts in the heater.

- Unless the heater is designed for use outdoors or in bathrooms, do not use in damp, wet areas.
- If you have a liquid-fueled space heater, use only the fuel recommended by the manufacturer.
- When refueling, turn off the heater and let it cool down completely before adding fuel. Wipe away any spills promptly. Before you buy a kerosene heater, check with your local fire department to ensure that it is legal.

*Information provided by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.  
[www.ul.com](http://www.ul.com)*

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

### ***2012 Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony***

The 2012 Citywide Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony will be held Thursday, March 8, 2012 at the Columbus Police Training Academy, located at 1000 North Hague Avenue, 7:30 am—10:30 am. Honored employees will be recognized for cost saving suggestions, Mayor's Award of Excellence attributes, commitment to Occupational Safety, Get Green Columbus initiatives, professional development, James M. Lendavic Veteran of the Year Award and years of service for those who in 2011 achieved 50 (1961), 35 (1976), 30 (1981), 25 (1986) or 20 (1991) years of continuous service.

### **IMPORTANT DEADLINES**

Deadline to submit nominations for the James M. Lendavic Veteran of the Year Award: **December 31, 2011**

Deadline to submit nominations for Mayor's Award of Excellence, Cost Saving Suggestions and Occupational Safety: **Wednesday, January 4, 2012 at 11:59pm**

Nomination forms can be found on the HR website and with each HR office. Any questions, please contact the Department of Human Resources at 645-6373.

<http://intranet/HumanResources/Employee-offers/employee-nominations.htm>

All nominations and ideas **MUST** be submitted to the Department of Human Resources by 11:59pm on January 4, 2012. There will be **no extensions** granted this year.

## Floor Warden Responsibilities

During an emergency, Floor Wardens have many responsibilities. Whether the emergency is a medical emergency, a fire, a weather emergency, or situation of workplace violence, the floor warden is in charge of implementing the Emergency Action Plan for his/her area(s).

A Floor Warden must train the respective staff in the primary and secondary evacuation/relocation routes from their work areas. They will also practice going to their designated assembly or shelter locations and account for all staff within their group. If staff members are found missing the Floor Warden will immediately advise the Emergency Coordinator.

Each Floor Warden reports to the Emergency Coordinator (or alternate). The Floor Warden will be responsible for the following:



**Direct Evacuation of Employees and Guests:** During an emergency, the Floor Warden must take necessary action to direct evacuation/relocation of employees and guests, uses emergency equipment, and informs the Emergency Coordinator of the situation.



**Know Potential Hazards:** The Floor Warden must know the potential hazards of processes, equipment, and materials used within the area.

**Assign Evacuation Route:** The Floor Warden will assign the proper evacuation/relocation routes and evacuation/relocation procedures to the designated assembly or shelter areas.

**Communicate Evacuation:** Upon notification of evacuation, the Floor Warden must extend evacuation communication to respective areas.

**Direct Staff to Regrouping Location:** The Floor Warden must direct staff and guests to the appropriate designated assembly or shelter area and make a full account of all respective staff.

**Communicate with Emergency Coordinator:** The Floor Warden must communicate back to the Emergency Coordinator (or alternate) of unaccounted and/or injured staff and guests, or other information as predetermined.

**Check for Persons Needing Assistance:** The Floor Warden must check all areas for persons needing assistance in evacuating/relocating. (i.e. - Bathrooms and/or person with disabilities).

Have you recently been assigned Floor Warden responsibilities? Are you currently Floor Warden and would like refresher training? A course will be offered:

**Wednesday, January 11, 2012**

**1:30 pm—3:00 pm**

**City Hall, 90 W. Broad St., 4th Floor, Room 418**

**To register, please contact Alice Evans at 614-645-4314**

## Ring in the New Year Tobacco Free

Being aware of the myths and support programs to help you quit will increase your chances of success.

### **Myth #1: Many smokers live to a very old age.**

Truth: While there may be the occasional individual that defies the odds, they are few and far between. Smoking after 50 years of age significantly increases your risk from dying of cancer, heart disease, upper respiratory disease by more than 3 times the risk of non-smokers.

### **Myth #2: I can quit if I wanted.**

Truth: About 3% of tobacco users can quit. They are the exception rather than the rule. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance that not only causes changes in brain chemistry to make smokers crave cigarettes, but also rewires thought patterns due to cravings and withdrawal. Seeing someone else smoke or smelling smoke can make a smoker crave a cigarette. Between cigarettes, the brain craves more nicotine because it indirectly releases dopamine, the feel good chemical in the brain.

### **Myth #3: I have been smoking so long, I do not think I can quit.**

Truth: If you have been smoking for a long time it will take a lot of commitment and support to quit, it is not by any means impossible. Thousands of people successfully quit each year. Those who have the most success are those who work with a tobacco cessation counselor and use medications to help alleviate withdrawal symptoms. Even if you relapse, you learn more about where you slipped up and what can help move you forward to successfully quitting.

**Quitting is not easy, but is definitely possible.**

**The rewards of quitting are life saving:**

**20 minutes after quitting:** Blood pressure lowers, Pulse rate drops, circulation improves

**8 Hours:** Carbon monoxide and blood oxygen levels return to normal

**24 Hours:** Chance of heart attack decreases

**48 Hours:** Nerve endings start to re-grow, ability to smell and taste improves

**2 Weeks to 3 Months:** Circulation improves, walking becomes easier, lung function increases

**1 to 9 Months:** Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decreases

**1 Year:** Risk of heart disease cut in half of that of smoker

**Combining tobacco cessation counseling with medication yields success rates of fifty to sixty five percent. Only twenty to forty percent of those that use medication alone are successful.**

Avoid situations and people that make you want to smoke. Instead of joining a co-worker for a cigarette break, go for a walk, talk to one of your support people, or encourage your co-worker to join you in the Tobacco Free for Life program.

Avoid weight gain by exercising, talking to your doctor or tobacco cessation counselor about healthy foods to substitute when you have a craving. Check out [www.hr.columbus.gov/healthycolumbus](http://www.hr.columbus.gov/healthycolumbus) for opportunities to get active.

Have a plan to deal with withdrawal symptoms, and relapse. Your tobacco cessation counselor can help you with this.

Find resources to help you deal with stress since, stress is the number 1 trigger for relapse. A tobacco cessation counselor can help you with this as well.

When you are ready to quit, let your family, friends, and co-workers know you are trying to quit. Be specific with them regarding how they can help.

Prepare yourself for the physical and mental withdrawal of quitting. Let friends and family know that this is a difficult time for you and to be patient and understanding.

**If your New Year's resolution is to quit tobacco, let the Healthy Columbus program help you. As a City employee, you and your adult dependents are eligible to quit for free, and get free patches, gum or lozenge through the Tobacco Free for Life program.**

**For more information, contact Carlotta Hughes-Culp at 614-414-0249 or send e-mail to: [chughesculp@totalwellnessconcepts.biz](mailto:chughesculp@totalwellnessconcepts.biz).**

## Electronic Pay Stubs Coming In January!

Plans are in the works to make City paycheck and direct deposit advices available to all employees electronically beginning in January 2012. The electronic advices will be available through CHRIS Employee Self Service via the Internet and therefore accessible at home, the library, or wherever employees may choose to access their account.

In addition to making this information more convenient for employees, it also represents a significant step forward in the City's effort to "go green" and conserve resources. Specific details regarding user login, web address, etc. will be coming later this month.

## Fitness Basic & Fitness Challenge

### Healthy Columbus Fitness Programming

**Quarter 1 2012 classes begin the week of January 9th and end the week of March 12th.**

The new Fitness Basic and Fitness Challenge classes are taught by Dimitrious Stanley and his staff of personal trainers. Dimitrious is a former Ohio State and Miami Dolphins Wide Receiver and currently owns Source Fitness.

### Fitness Basic:

This 12-week class is just right for people who have just started to be active or who want to get active. The class content will vary each week but will all include low-to-medium impact activities, stretches and light weights. Each class is officially 30 minutes long, but participants will have the option to stay for an additional 15 minutes if they would like. All participants should bring a water bottle to class.

(Continued on back cover)

## Frequently Asked Questions

- Q.** Who will have access to on-line pay stubs?
- A.** All active City of Columbus employees. It will not be accessible to retired or separated employees
- Q.** When will on-line pay stubs be made available to employees?
- A.** On-line pay stubs will be rolled out in two phases. The first phase will make on-line pay stub information available to all employees but Police and Fire with the January 12, 2012 pay cycle. The second phase will make on-line pay stub information available to Police and Fire employees with the January 26, 2012 pay cycle
- Q.** Where will employees be able to access on-line pay stub information?
- A.** On-line pay stubs are available via the Internet and therefore accessible from any PC with Internet access
- Q.** Will employees continue to receive paper paystubs in addition to having access to on-line electronic paystubs?
- A.** No, employees receiving direct deposit will receive paper stubs with January 2012 pay cycles only. Beginning February 2012, direct deposit employees will no longer receive paper paystubs. *Employees receiving paper checks will continue to receive paper checks in addition to having access to on-line pay stub information*
- Q.** What information will be accessible?
- A.** On-line pay stubs will contain same data as current paper stubs
- Q.** Do employees need to enroll to access on-line paystubs?
- A.** No, all active City of Columbus employees will be automatically enrolled
- Q.** Is the site secure?
- A.** Yes, the site follows current City of Columbus internet security guidelines
- Q.** When will updated pay stub information be available for the current pay cycle?
- A.** By 10am on Thursday of the pay week



## Holidays: Cheery or Dreary?

Holiday cheer and New Year's celebrations abound and all is well with the world. Or, is it? While many of us can enjoy and delight in the holidays, more of us than one might think, can experience stress, sadness, loneliness or even depression through the holidays. The reasons vary, yet much of it stems from ever-increasing pressure to "be happy," even when we don't feel that way. Some other contributing factors may include: memories of holidays we can no longer live up to; loss of loved ones; family misunderstandings; financial hardship making the "new year" seem less bright; loss of daylight; harried schedules; a down economy; and so on. So, what are some things we can do to bring balance and even joy back into our holidays?

**Here are just a few:**

### **Keep a balanced schedule and prioritize - plan ahead!**

If you cannot do it all, let it go and do what makes sense. Establish realistic expectations. In the words of a famous architect, sometimes "less is more." Feel free to let go of traditions that no longer fit or are no longer enjoyable.

**Help someone else.** Volunteer. Experience true giving.

### **Keep a balanced "You." Eat right, Get enough rest.**

And, keep up with your wellness regimen. If you work out, stick with it. If you do yoga, make sure to fit it in. If you have children, keeping them on normal schedules, bedtimes, meal times, etc. will go a long way to preventing stress and drama at home.

**Do what feels most comforting.** Those who have experienced the loss of loved ones may want to vary traditions, or plan a small "remembrance" activity—whatever feels comforting. If lonely and withdrawn, try planning a few holiday events anyway; or, if feeling overwhelmed and overscheduled, then limit or delete activities from your schedule. Perhaps a quiet evening at home with the family or close friends isn't such a bad idea.

**New Year's Resolution.** Commitment to self-improvement is commendable. Keeping goals specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and time-based (SMART) will help them have more meaning. But, try not to bite off more than you can chew or is reasonable given other circumstances in your life. Goals aimed too high are frustrating; and goals set too low are non-motivating.

**Reflect on your blessings.** Take time to reflect on the blessings that you do have in your life. This may help remind you that your challenges are likely temporary and minor in comparison.

And, keep in mind, for more assistance, please feel free to call the EAP at (614) 645 6894.

## Fitness Basic & Fitness Challenge

Healthy Columbus Fitness Programming

(Continued)

### Fitness Challenge:

This 12-week class is appropriate for seasoned fitness fanatics. Classes will feature high-impact cardio, significant work with free weights, body weights, resistance bands and stretching. Classes are 45 minutes long and are offered in the early evening- **you will break a sweat!** Participants are strongly encouraged to bring a towel and a water bottle.

Call Jen Morel at 614) 645-0988 or visit the Healthy Columbus website for more information.



healthyCOLUMBUS  
CITY EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM

**Visit the Healthy Columbus Program website!**

[www.hr.columbus.gov/healthycolumbus](http://www.hr.columbus.gov/healthycolumbus)

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

United HealthCare ( Medical).....1-800-681-3849  
Claims, Pharmacy/UHC Mail Order (MEDCO), Pre-certification  
Optum/Nurseline.....1-877-365-7922  
United Behavioral Health.....1-800-358-0365  
Behavioral health, substance abuse, psychiatric treatments  
Website.....www.myuhc.com  
Delta (Dental).....1-800-524-0149  
Website.....www.deltadentaloh.com  
Vision Service Plan (Vision).....1-800-877-7195  
Website.....www.vsp.com  
United HealthCare (COBRA): .....1-866-747-0048  
Dearborn National: Short-Term Disability.....1-800-778-2281  
Filing a Claim: Contact Division of Human Resources,  
Risk Management at 645-8065 or Payroll  
AFLAC.....1-800-992-3522  
Deferred Compensation.....1-877-644-6457  
Deferred Compensation Website.....www.ohio457.org  
Colonial Life.....1-800-272-5025  
OPERS.....1-800-222-7377  
EAP.....614-645-6894  
City Website.....http://www.columbus.gov  
Intranet.....http://Intranet/Agencies/Human Resources

### HR CONNECTIONS

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